

Message Text

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TAGS: USINJC, IN, US

SUBJECT: INDO-US JOINT SUBCOMMISSION MEETING ON SCIENCE &R

TECHNOLOGY: RESPONSIBILITY AND CLEARANCE OF JOINT
RESEARCH PROJECTS

REFS: A. 75 DELHI 17193, B. 75 STATE 305056.

1. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY CONVENED A MEETING LAST SATURDAY WITH THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN SUBCOMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, TO DISCUSS THE INDIAN POSITION ON JOINT RESEARCH PROJECTS SUPPORTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SUBCOMMISSION AND THE SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY PROGRAM (SFCP), (US-OWNED RUPEES). IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE GROUP, ACCORDING TO DR. DESHPANDE (DOST), THAT THE SFC PROGRAM HAS BEEN A CONTINUING, SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM FOR FIFTEEN YEARS WITH OVER 200 ONGOING JOINT PROJECTS. THIS ESTABLISHED PROGRAM SHOULD CONTINUE AND BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOI MINISTRIES INVOLVED, DEPENDING UPON THE AREAS OF RESEARCH. THE NEW DIVISION OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (MOF) INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE (REFTEL A) WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SCREENING ALL

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NEW SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY PROJECTS FOR OVERALL GOI

APPROVAL. PROJECTS THAT ARE DETERMINED SENSITIVE BY THE CONCERNED MINISTRY, WILL BE REFERRED TO THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR A DETERMINATION.

2. IT WAS FURTHER AGREED AT THE MEETING THAT THE S&T SUBCOMMISSION WILL TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR NEW PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE SUBCOMMISSION ITSELF IN THE DESIGNATED SPECIAL PRIORITY AREAS.

3. EMBASSY SCIENCE OFFICERS INDICATED TO DESHPANDE THAT WE WOULD HOPE TO AVOID ANY SUCH DISTINCTION OF THIS SORT AND SHOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE BROAD SCOPE OF INDO-US S&T ACTIVITIES. DESHPANDE TOLD US THAT NAG CHAUDHURI AND CERTAIN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE STILL DO NOT WANT TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ONGOING 200 SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY PROJECTS, NOR ANY NEW PROJECT THAT WOULD BE NEGOTIATED WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE. SCIENCE OFFICERS SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS ALL PROJECTS COULD BE CHanneled THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SCREENING COMMITTEE AS A PROCESS TO ACT AS A REVIEW FOR THE S&T SUBCOMMISSION. HOWEVER, ONE MAIN CONCERN WAS THAT ALL SFCP SHOULD RECEIVE AN OVERALL GOI APPROVAL INCLUDING MEE AND DEFENSE. DESHPANDE FEELS THAT IF THE SUBCOMMISSION WERE TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL INDO-US ACTIVITIES, HE WOULD REQUIRE A FULL STAFFED SECRETARIAT TO REVIEW AND ADMINISTER THESE PROGRAMS. ACCORDING TO DESHPANDE, THIS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE SINCE HE IS NOW THE ONLY FOCAL POINT FOR ALL INDIAN JOINT COMMISSIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES ON S&T.

4. COMMENT: AT ISSUE HERE IS NOT RPT NOT THE SUBJECT OF GOI ENDORSEMENT OF ALL PROJECTS, WHETHER SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY OR NOT, BUT LOCATION OF SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECTS. WE ARE TAKING POSITION WITH THE GOI THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE AGREED ON ENDORSEMENT ISSUE AS INDICATED IN JOINT COMMISSION MINUTES. WE HAVE NOT, HOWEVER, MADE MUCH PROGRESS IN GETTING GOI TO ACCEPT THE POSITION THAT THE SUBCOMMISSION IS CONCERNED WITH TOTALITY OF US-INDIA SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION. PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE GOI AND UNWILLINGNESS OF NAG CHAUDHURI TO ACCEPT EVEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECTS OVER WHICH HE HAS NO CONTROL.

5. WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO WORK OUT LANGUAGE WITH THE GOI WHICH WOULD PUT UNDER RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SUBCOMMISSION AT LEAST POLICY ASPECTS OF TOTALITY OF SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION WHILE RESERVING TO INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES CONCERNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPECIFIC SFC PROJECTS WHICH ARE NOT

INITIATED BY THE SUBCOMMISSION.

6. AS WE WOULD PREFER TO GET THIS MATTER STRAIGHTENED
OUT TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE BEFORE THE SUBCOMMISSION
MEETING, WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION
SO THAT WE CAN CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOI.
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